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LETTERS OF WILLIAM BYRD, FIRST.

(From his letter book in the Collection of the Virginia Historical Society)

(Continued)

To MR. GOWER.

Virg'a. March y^e 31st 1685

S^r

Yours of the 8th of August last come Safe to my Hands, though y^e poor Gen^t that was to bring itt, dyed att Sea the 10th of 8b^r much lamented by all his friends, y^e Old Gentlewoman Seemed mighty disconsolate Some short time, however was marry'd again abt y^e latter End of Jan'ry & is now mighty earnest to gett all y^e Estate into her hands, & I daily expect a Writt against Cap^t Randolph & my Selfe (Ex^{rs} here) for her bond of 1900 l. w^{ch} I fear will in a manner carry away all the Estate here.

I am Sorry I could recieve but one letter from you this year, but hope to hear oftner hereafter. I returne you hearty thanks for your token, wth w^{ch} wee remembred all your Good healths & shall Suddenly Send you Some Small returne. My wife & Girls are well, & y^e biggest (Ursula (1)) comes herewith. My wife Salutes you, Pray give my Service to all where its due, & accept the Same most heartily from

S^r

Yo^r oblidged friend & Servant

Wm. Byrd

Pray Send mee Some Savoy

Cabbage Seed

To m^r Gower ☿ Culpeper

(1) Ursula Byrd, known in her family (doubtless from her complexion) as "Little Nutty" was born about 1681. She returned to Virginia, married Robert Beverley, the historian, and died before she was seventeen, leaving one child, William Beverley, afterwards of "Blandfield." Her tomb with Byrd and Beverley arms impaled, was formerly at Jamestown. See this Magazine XII, 317, for copy of epitaph, and a drawing of part of the tomb containing the arms.

To _____

Virg'a. March y^e 29th 1685.Gen^t

This Serves to accompany Cap^t Bradly with Sixty one H^{ds} of Tobacco & 6 of Skins, w^{ch} I hope will come Safe to hand. Since my last, I rec^d your acco^t via Maryland, truely I believe y^e Wm & Mary a very hard penyworth, I wish shee gets well home, for shee is a very dull Sailer by all report. I am Sorry the losse of Sugars keeps mee So far behind hand, & Hall comeing in So late, y^e Tob'o was generally bought up, before his arriveall, that I fear I shall make a bad x x [illegible] of it this year, hope shall Send enough to clear all [illegible] I have sent for. I have rec'd great complaints of my Duffields, the colour is too light, a Darker blew pleases better plentifully Supplied & if I have not as good [illegible] not expect to Sell them to any Advantage. [illegible] offer^d for Tob'o next year, & y^e planter (if [illegible]) a great Crop, & hath prepared accordingly. Paggens concern [illegible] certain intelligence of a negro ship w^{ch} will be here by [illegible] of May, if no extroradinary accident intervene, they offer for the trade. I believe Tobacco may doe well another year, but am Sure, they that are not early Supplied here, can expect little, & I am halfe out of heart with Hall, to expect him a first ship, unlesse he comes out a month or two before any other. M^r Brain (who hath marry'd M^{rs} Grendon) pretends great matters though I cannot conceive w^t incouragement they have found this year, comeing into the Country in Sep^r wth 30 Servants & 1000 or 1200l. worth of Goods, & could not (notwithstanding they tooke 100 H^{ds} freight) dispatch a Small ship of ab^t 350 or 360 H^{ds}. If your designe by barbados fails, wee shall bee fouly disappointed for without Servants or slaves, no great crop is now to bee purchased, by Cap^t Morgan (who designs to Saile with or before this) I shall Send my Invoice, & by him write whats farther necessary. I hope to hear from you by all oppertunitys, & shall not trouble you farther at present but with my best respects & Service take leave

Gen^t

I have charged a bill of Ex^{ch} on yo Yo^r reall fr^d & Serv^t
to Cap^t Bradly for 8 l 10s St'g w^{ch} W B
please to pay accordingly

TO MR NORTH

Virg'a March y^e 29th 1685.S^r

My last to you by Hall, by whom I sent an Invoice for my Indian trade, w^{ch} I hope may come in timely to Satisfaction this onely Serves to Salute you & our friends by Bradly I shall write more largely by Ruds who Sails wth or before this, by whom have Sent you ab^t 80 H^{ds} Tob'o & Six of fures, as allso my Invoice for English Goods; I had no occasion for those Guns m^r Dyose Sent mee, they now ly by & I have writ him word that if hee will take (1st) cost for them (w^h is 5l. 15s) I would desire you to pay him, otherwise shall deliver them to his Order. Yo^r Duffields much complain'd of both y^e goodnesse & color a darker blew pleases the Indians best. Cap^t Bradly tells mee hee expects his ship will bee Sold when hee comes home, & y^t hee may buy her & Sett her out to Sea under 1000l. St'g. If So I promised him if you would come in (& mony will hold out) to hold y^t, Cap^t Randolph & Some others here have promised the like; I looke on him to bee an industrious & succesfull man & imagine it can bee no hard bargain if (as hee Saith) y^e ship bee well found; Pray remember mee to all our friends & accept of mine & my wives best respects & Service to yo^rselfe & Lady from

S^rYo^r friend & Serv^t

W B

Yo^r blew plains were y^r best onely Something too dear
To m^r North & Bradly

TO CHARLES DYOSE

Virginia Aprill y^e 1st 1685.S^r

Yo^{rs} by Cap^t Bradly came to my Hands wth Eight Guns (as I suppose) in a Case not yett open'd, I have at this time about

100 of my owne, & cannot expect to Sell them this year, I have offer'd y^m to m^r Harrison on your Acco^t but hee told mee hee had no occasion for y^m nor any Order ab^t them, the Country at this time is much over Stocked with tradeing Goods, of all Sorts. I am Sorry I could not Serve you in this; if you will take y^e 1st cost (wth is 5. 15) for y^m, I will write to m^r North to pay it you, otherwise order whom you please to receive them, & they shall bee deliver^d; My best respects & Service to your selfe & Lady from

Yo^r friend & Serv^t

To m^r Charls Dyose

W B

To _____

Virg'a P'o April 1685

S^r

I wrote to you 2 days Since p^r Bradly who is not yet gone, this will (I hope) come Safe to your Hands, by Cap^t Ruddes wth 8 H^{ds} of Tob^o & 6 of fures & skins. I have now allso Sent my Invoice for English Goods, & I fear drawne it a little too largely, but if mony will not hold out you may abate Some-things for I doe not care to bee in debt. Pray Send my Goods in a first Ship but not where m^{rs} Perry & Lane ship my other Cargo. If the Booth will take them Send by her. My Little Daughter Ursula comes in the Culpeper pray if shee wants anything lett her bee Supplied. I shall not doubt yo^r kindnesse. I suppose my father Horsmonden (2) will take care for her w'n hee hears of her Arriveall. Cap^t Rudds is now with mee & tells mee hee hath but 83 h^{ds} of Tobacco on board, though there is 84 mention^d in my Invoice, (his men as hee Saith) haveing

(2) "Father Horsmanden," was Warham Horsmanden, who had emigrated to Virginia during the Civil Wars and had been a member of the House of Burgesses and Council. He returned to England at the Restoration and lived first at Lenham, Kent., and later at Purleigh, Essex, where he was patron of the rectory. He was son of Rev. Daniel Horsmanden, Rector of Ulcombe, Kent, and his wife Ursula, daughter of Sir Warham St. Leger, of Ulcombe. He died in 1691, aged 64. His son Daniel (the "Brother Daniel" of the Byrd letters), M. A. Magdalen Hall, Oxford, 1679, became rector of Purleigh 1680. See this Magazine XV, 314-317.

left one behind. However hee promiseth if the H^{de} bee found on board, itt shall bee deliver^d you. I guesse it may bee No 299 but am not certain; I shall not trouble you farther att present, but with best respects & Service to yo^r selfe, Lady & all our friends, take leave

S^r

Yo^r friend & Servant
Wm B

To M p Ruds

To _____

Virg'a Aprill the first 1685.

Gen^t

I wrote to you 2 days Since p^r Cap^t Bradly, wth I hope wth w^t Goods I sent will come Safe to Hand, as allso this p the Culpeper wth the Tobacco & furies as p bill of Ladeing & invoice inclosed, allso a little daughter of mine (wth her maid) who is designed to my father Horsmonden in Essex. I hope you'l please to bee kind to y^e Child, & assist her on her way. Inclosed is my invoice for Goods which I hope may come in timely. Cap^t Morgan is now with mee & tells mee hee cannot give mee bills, yett not knowing whether all is on board or not I suppose there is no mistake, & if I have not oportunity m^r P^r Perry will Send you a bill of Ladeing. If you could help mee to a likely Youth that might bee trusty, & was capable of buisnesse, it would doe mee a Kindnesse, hee should bee put to no hard worke, his chief buisnesse would bee in the Store, the boy I have now is allmost free & I cannot bee without one. I hope you will bee carefull in my Indian Trucke y^t nothing bee wanting, but Duffields, Cottons & plains to bee good in their kinds & of a Darker blew then formerly, there is on board this ship 5 H^{ds} of Tob'o (as p inclosed invoice) ship^d by order of m^r P^r Perry for a Servant boy (belonging to y^e Wm & Mary) Sold to John Willson. By Cap^t Tibbets you shall hear farther My best respects & Service to all where Due & please to accept the Same your selves from

Gen^t

Yo^r reall frd & Serv^t
W B

My humble Service to my Lady Berkeley (3) if not come away.
If my Daughter wants anything lett her bee Supplied.

To _____

Virg'a Ap'll y^e 1st 1685

Dear S^r

I am Sorry I was So unhappy as to receive but one letter from you this year & that gave mee an acc^t you were indisposed, & truly I should have fear^d your health, had not m^r North, often writt mee word all our friends were Well of w^m you Ime Sure ever deservedly hath y^e first place in my thoughts, & truly if kindnesse to any one in a Superlative degree bee a demonstration of friendship, I have ever found it from you beyond expression, wth I shall never bee able Sufficently to acknowledge. I am Sorry our poor friend that should have brought yo^r lett^r dyed att Sea, So untimely before hee had past y^e meridian of his age, the good old womⁿ: (that shee might loose no time) marry^d again in Jan'y to a Stranger. wee lately dranke your token att Cap^t Randolphs amongst a great deale of good company & returne our hearty thanks for the Same. We dranke all yo^r Good healths & designe you shall hear farther from us Suddenly. I have a little daughter comes home in this ship & have no reason in the least to Suspect yo^r kindnesse to her, nor Assistance one her way into Essex. Pray present Cap^t Morgan wth a p^t of plate ab^t 6 or 1.7 price. My best respects & Service to all where due, & in a more p^ticular manner to yo^r selfe & Lady from

D^r S^r

Yo^r Oblidged fr^d & Serv^t

W B

(3) "My Lady Berkeley," widow of Sir William. It is probable that not long after her return to Virginia she married Col. Phillipp Ludwell, of "Rich Neck." She was a Kentish Culpeper (a first cousin, it seems to Governor Lord Culpeper) and was probably related to Byrd's wife. On Oct. 5, 1680, Lord Culpeper wrote to his sister in England "My Lady Berkeley is married to Mr. Ludwell and thinkes no more of our world." After the English fashion she retained her higher title, and at Jamestown a fragment of stone with the letters "Frances, La." is all that remains of her tomb.

TO DANIEL HORSMONDEN

Virginia June y^e 5th 1685

Dear Bro.

Least you should have just occasion to blame mee, for not giving you an acco^t of our Condition here, I send this to acquaint you of our wellfare, though almost x x x x ab^t 5 weeks Since, by a mighty flood wth came wth great Violence downe the river & raised it upward of 20 foot above y^e common, & hath done mee & my neighbo^{rs} much damage. My wife is fair for another little one; little Molly is well, & I hope little Nutty by this is well with you. Cap^t Randolph, m^r Banister in health & give you their best respects & Service. Pray give mine to all our friends & my blessing to my Child'n and accept of my most unstained love & Service yo^r selfe from

Yo^r loveing bro & Serv^t

W B

To Bro. Dan'll

 To _____
Virg'a June 6th 1685Gen^t

Since my last I rec^d one from you via Barbados, wth keeps us still in hopes of the Pinke, you formerly menconed: & wee now daily expect if it should faile twould bee an unhappy dis-appointment haveing neglected all other ways of Supplying our Selves wth those commodities. the 26 & 27th of Ap'll last here a mighty fresh came downe this river, itt rise ab^t 3 foot higher then ever any knowne before, carry'd away all our fences, destroy'd all our Tob'o plants, wth much more mischief. Since which hath been such a drought, that I feel wee (hereabouts) shall Scarce make any Corne or Tob'o either: I hope what Goods Sent you by Hall, Bradly & Culpeper got Safe, this by Cap^t Tibbet wth x x x x H^{ds} of Tob'o & five of fures I hope will doe the like. Should have been glad by my last to have had our Acco^t of y^e market of fures & as well as others, but its possible was forgotten: Pray Send some better paper p next,

for this is not fitt for writeing as you may easily perceive. I have Sent by Cap^t Tibbet a patterne of a Saw for a Saw mill & would desire you to Send mee a do of Saws according to that paterne, onely would have them 6 inches Longer, the Bever Sent herewith (I thinke) is generally good though a great part of it hath been Wett wth makes it show rough, yett being well dried I conceive its nere the worse, w^t y^e Tob'o is I know not but Col'o Powell promised it should bee as good as their parts did afford. I shall not trouble you farther at psent, but wth respects & Service take Leave

Gen^t

Yo^r fr^d & Serv^t

W B

To ——— RAND(4)

Virg'a June 8th 1685

Dear S^r

I wrote to you last by the Culpeper by whom I sent my little daughter Nutty & hope ere this is Safely arrived, my wife is fair for another, because shee will not bee behind her Sister; ab^t the latter end of Aprill here hapen'd the greatest flood was ever knowne, ore floweing all our Lands came into my dwelling house (5), & did us infinite mischief. should bee glad to hear

(4) This "Brother" Rand, appears to have married a Horsmanden, a sister of Mrs. Byrd. This conjecture is confirmed by some entries in a Purleigh register. Susanna, daughter of Daniel Horsmanden had in 1691 for one of her godfathers "Nordest Rand Esq.," while in 1692, one of the sponsors for Ursula, another daughter, was "Mrs. Ursula Rand, her aunt."

(5) Byrd's dwelling house into which the flood came could not, of course, have been on the present Belvidere Street or anywhere else on Oregon Hill in Richmond. The residence on this height must have been built later. Probably this freshet induced the removal to the hill. This reference seems to render it very, unlikely that William Byrd, the founder of Richmond, who was born in 1674, had as his birthplace either of the known sites on the hill. It is more probable that he was born at this house accessible to the water, near the river bank. Thomas Stegg from whom the elder Byrd inherited much land near the Falls of James River had a stone house in the low grounds on the south side of the river opposite the present Chesapeake & Ohio wharves. This may have been Byrd's residence in 1680.

oftner from you, how all our friends doe, & what news, of w^{ch} you have often the Speediest way of Sending the ships Sometimes lyeing long att Deale. All friends here in health & give you their Service. Pray give mine where due; especially to Sister Betty, Dudly, m^r Knowles, & most unfeigned to yo^r selfe & Lady from

Dear S^r

Yo^r affectionate Bro. & Serv^t

W B

To Bro. Rand

To MR GOWER

Virg'a June 8th 1685

S^r

I wrote to you formerly by the Culpeper & gave you then an acco^t of the losse of our good friend Coz Grendon, I hope his Estate in England will Satisfy his ingagements there for here will not bee any thing to bee had, the old Gentlewo. haveing a very firme bond for 1900 l. St'g. w^{ch} will take preheminance & Sweep away all the Virg'a Estate, I wish wee could have served our friends that way. Wee dranke your health merrily wth yo^r token, & by Col'o Hill have Sent a returne. Yo^r Bro.(6) & all y^e friends here in health, onely almost drowned lately by a mighty flood w^{ch} raised our river upward of 20 foot above an Ordinary tide. Pray give my best respects to all our friends at Edmonton, & where else you know its due, & accept the Same yo^r selfe, wth hearty thanks for all yo^r favo^{rs} from

Yo^r reall fr^d & Servant

W B

To m^r Gower

To P—

Virg'a Nob^r y^e 8th 1685

Gen^t

This Serves onely to cover the inclosed bill of Ladeing & Invoice, hope to have time to inlarge, if I can gett a conveniency to Send my letters downe

Yo^r fr^d & Serv^t

To P p Wyn

W B

(6) "Your brother" was Abel Gower of Henrico County, in regard to whom see this magazine XVII, 400, 401. The person addressed was Thomas Gower, of Edmonton, England.

TO MR NORTH

Virg'a Nob^r y^e 8th 1685S^r

This Serves onely to cover the inclosed Invoice & bill of Ladeing for 20 H^{ds} of Tobacco, this ship saileing sooner then expected have not time to adde any thing but respects to all our friends from

Yo^r fr^d & Serv^t

W B

To m^r North p y^e Booth

To _____

Virg'a Xb^r y^e 8th 1685Gen^t

Its about three weeks since I wrote to you by Wynne who (I hope) is, by this prety well on his Voyage. Last weeke I hear the Booth Sail^d, I had not notice thereof So could n write. I hope this p Hall will not bee long after, herewith I have Sent 36 h^{ds} Tob'o & four of furs & Skins, w^{ch} Cap^t Hall would not let mee put on board wth out leaving 4 H^{ds} of Tob'o of y^e 80 hee promised mee though hee could fetch Tob'o from m^r Cainfields. Its possible hee may bee glad of them another year. Yo^r Goods sent p him I hope prove well, I hear few complaints as yet, for Indian Goods none as yet Sold. Hereafter shall give you Acco^t how they prove. I wonder you should Send mee 2 Close stools (w^{ch} to mee or any else I thinke are uselesse) without pans. I suppose they might bee forgott, as allso womens Stockings of w^{ch} I rec^d one doz. though had none charged mee. I want one Reame of paper 2 being charged but I come to Hand, these I thinke are the most materiall Errors, if I find more shall hereafter acquaint you with them. Hope Tob'o may doe well this year. All agree its generally better y'n hath been of late years. The proposition ab^t negro's I hope will bee comply'd wth & Wynne dispatched, for Paggens (7)

(7) Petter Paggen & Co. of London, did a large trade with Virginia about this period.

Concerne may justly glory in the trade of this River haveing been mighty Successfull these two last years. No News as yet of our Salt from Orton, Roger Newham hath lately promised us to Send it up. Ime Sure, I want it. Ships here will find a ready dispatch, Newham & Bradly will Saile within a month if Weather p'mits. Wee are in daily expectation of y^e Culpeper, freight yet wanting. All our friends well. Pray pay any charge my father Horsmonden shall desire you, or shall bee any otherwise due, for my Child^{ns} maintenance & Schooling in England, its but 3 days Since yours Via barbados & p Deptford ketch came to Hand, wth an Acco^t of y^e Holl^d Venditia I wish it proves no worse this year, shall not enlarge att present, but wth best respects take Leave G^t

Yo^r reall fr^d & Serv^t

W B.

(To be continued)